

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
29 July 1983

SAN FRANCISCO
SOVIET REACT TO TUNNELING REPORTS
BY WILLIAM D. MURRAY

Revelations by the federal government that a former FBI agent dug a spy tunnel under the Soviet Consulate were denounced as a "gross violation" of international law Friday by a ranking diplomat at the mission.

Soviet Consul Vladimir M. Kulagin said news reports of the disclosure were "self-evident. It clearly proves a case of gross violation by a host country of international law."

An FBI agent fired for refusing to undergo a physical examination said he helped dig a tunnel for the agency in the early 1970s and tapped telephones of the trade missions of American allies in San Francisco.

David Castleberry said in Chattanooga, Tenn., that the government committed a gross "breach of security" by revealing the clandestine operations in court documents filed in response to his lawsuit challenging his dismissal as an agent last November. He weighs 280 pounds and claims he was fired for being overweight.

"The Justice Department never should have put this into the public record. They've opened up a Pandora's box. This stuff is extremely classified. This was the dumbest, most stupid, asinine mistake the government has made in a long time."

A neighbor who has lived next to the building that houses the San Francisco Soviet Consulate since before the Russians moved in said that if tunnels were dug she was unaware of it.

"I don't believe it, really, I've lived here for about 30 years and nobody's dug in my cellar," Mrs. Marie Frick said.

"They (the Russians) bring in equipment and dig things up now and again. But nobody's used my house; that's why I don't believe it," she said speaking to a reporter through her upstairs window.

Occupants of the seven-story Russian consulate, located in the expensive Pacific Heights residential neighborhood, caused a stir in December, 1982, when they hastily constructed a rooftop addition without obtaining a building permit, raising suspicions of expanded electronic surveillance under way.

The addition, which the Soviets said was built to cover a leak, was taken down the next month.

Castleberry described the "ultra secret" spying to FBI Director William Webster in a confidential letter he wrote trying to get his job back four days after he was fired last November.

The Justice Department, apparently by mistake, placed the letter in U.S. District Court documents of a suit Castleberry filed last April to regain his job.

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Castleberry said the tunnel project was so important that the FBI took a picture of him inside the passageway and displayed it at training sessions.

"This is a breach of security," Castleberry said in an interview. "It seems incredible that they would go ahead and put that into the public record. That letter was written in confidence. It was a personal letter to Mr. Webster. These were super secret projects."

In Washington, the Justice Department and the FBI refused to comment.

Castleberry refused to elaborate on the letter, saying he took an oath to secrecy before he was fired while working in the FBI's Chattanooga office.

The Justice Department also included his personnel records in the court documents but secret code names for the projects were blacked out, Castleberry said.

In the letter to Webster, Castleberry described himself as a "loyal and dedicated employee" and said the FBI trusted him so much they picked him for special training by the CIA.

"I have installed microphones, transmitters and other devices in foreign and domestic cases. I have tapped the phones of individuals and groups. I was even involved in the ultra secret tapping of the phones of the trade missions of our allies in San Francisco in the early 1970s," the letter said.